



No. 958	Author Steven E. Backs, Wildlife Research Biologist	Date 7/7/2008
	Title 2008 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest - Check Station Results	

Abstract: Hunters harvested 12,204 wild turkeys in 85 of the 91 counties open to hunting. The 2008 harvest was the second highest harvest in 39 years exceeding the 2007 harvest by 1,041 birds (+9% increase). Estimated hunter success was around 22%. The majority of the birds were harvested in the earlier part of the season and the early morning hours. A total of 956 birds was taken during the youth-only weekend prior to the regular season (7.8% of the total statewide harvest). Juvenile and adult weights were up slightly compared to the mean weights of previous years. The proportion of juvenile turkeys in the harvest was 21% with 52% 2-yr-olds, and 27% ≥ 3 yr-olds. The south-central and southeastern regions supported 51% of the harvest followed by west-central and northern Indiana at 18% each.

Work Plan: # 204290; formerly Federal Aid Study/Job No.: W-26-R; Job 16-G-5.

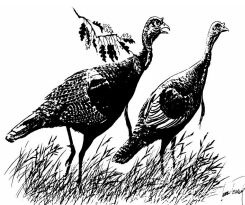
The 39th wild turkey hunt was held 23 April to 12 May 2008 with harvest data collected at 342 check stations throughout the turkey range. Hunters harvested 12,204 wild turkeys in 85 of the 91 counties open to hunting during the 19-day season. The 2008 harvest was the second highest harvest exceeding the 2007 harvest by 1,041 birds (+9% increase). Counties with high kills (>300 birds harvested) were Switzerland (533), Jefferson (464), Harrison (428), Greene (358), Dearborn (353), Perry (320), Washington (314), Clark (307), Jennings (304), Sullivan (303), Parke (302), and Lawrence (301) (**Table 1; Figure 1**).

Approximately 58% of the regular season's harvest occurred during the first 5 days with 37% occurring on weekends (**Figure 2**). A total of 956 birds was taken during the youth-only weekend (4/19 & 4/20) prior to the regular season (7.8% of the total statewide harvest). Approximately 70% of the harvest occurred by 1000 hrs and 80% by noon with 14% occurring after 1500 hrs (3 pm) to sunset (**Figure 3**). Unlicensed landowners/active military personnel accounted for 9% of the harvest. Based on spur measurements taken at check stations, juvenile gobblers (1 yr-old birds commonly referred to as "jakes") made up 22% of the 2008 harvest; 2 yr-olds (52%); ≥ 3 yr-olds (26%) (**Table 2; Figure 4**). Juvenile and adult mean weights were up very slightly compared to previous years.

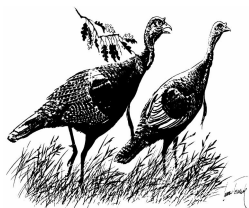
The south-central and southeast regions accounted for 51% of the harvest followed by the west-central and north regions that each supported 18% of the total harvest (**Figure 5**). Over the past 5 years, the north region harvest continues to increase both in total numbers and proportionally as turkey numbers increase (**Table 3**). The harvest growth in other regions appears to be leveling off as harvest numbers fluctuate up and down over time. As turkey populations mature the annual growth rate levels off with lower average annual production. Indiana has experienced below normal production the last 3 summers in the major portions of the turkey range. The proportion of juveniles in the harvest doesn't necessarily reflect differences in production but also reflects the relative potential opportunity for hunters to select an adult gobbler over a juvenile bird.

Reasons for the increased harvest (+9%) probably reflect a combination of general turkey population growth around the state, especially in some northern counties, and the continual increase in hunter numbers. There were some notable shifts in the top 20 county harvests but no consistent or identifiable trends. The shifts in county harvest rankings might reflect the wide variation in local turkey production in recent years or shifts in hunter pressure. Flooding the past 2 springs has influenced production in some southern counties along with hunter access during the hunting season. The total number of hunters in the field over the 19-day season was estimated at around 54,250 with an estimated hunter success of 22% (**Table 4**).

Special thanks go to Roger Hunter, Mitchell office, who put together the check station materials and to Susan Pierce and Steve Burcham who handled various aspects of the data entry. Acknowledgment also goes to the 342 volunteer check



station operators for their cooperation.



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Table 1. Indiana wild turkey harvest by county, spring 2007 and 2008.

County	2007 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	2008 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Difference from prior year	Percent Change
Adams	2	0.0%	5	0.0%	3	150%
Allen	14	0.1%	15	0.1%	1	7%
Bartholomew	88	0.8%	105	0.9%	17	19%
Benton	5	0.0%	10	0.1%	5	100%
Blackford	3	0.0%	5	0.0%	2	67%
Boone	3	0.0%	2	0.0%	-1	-33%
Brown	187	1.7%	205	1.7%	18	10%
Carroll	5	0.0%	12	0.1%	7	140%
Cass	30	0.3%	34	0.3%	4	13%
Clark	309	2.8%	307	2.5%	-2	-1%
Clay	107	1.0%	134	1.1%	27	25%
Clinton	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	---
Crawford	264	2.4%	247	2.0%	-17	-6%
Daviess	107	1.0%	109	0.9%	2	2%
Dearborn	391	3.5%	353	2.9%	-38	-10%
Decatur	48	0.4%	51	0.4%	3	6%
DeKalb	75	0.7%	116	1.0%	41	55%
Delaware	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100%
Dubois	205	1.8%	213	1.7%	8	4%
Elkhart	40	0.4%	56	0.5%	16	40%
Fayette	40	0.4%	48	0.4%	8	20%
Floyd	69	0.6%	87	0.7%	18	26%
Fountain	144	1.3%	156	1.3%	12	8%
Franklin	285	2.6%	297	2.4%	12	4%
Fulton	58	0.5%	81	0.7%	23	40%
Gibson	114	1.0%	131	1.1%	17	15%
Grant	4	0.0%	6	0.0%	2	50%
Greene	354	3.2%	358	2.9%	4	1%
Hamilton	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100%
Hancock	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	---
Harrison	402	3.6%	428	3.5%	26	6%
Hendricks	7	0.1%	9	0.1%	2	29%
Henry	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open	Not Open
Howard	11	0.1%	7	0.1%	-4	-36%
Huntington	17	0.2%	33	0.3%	16	94%
Jackson	224	2.0%	277	2.3%	53	24%
Jasper	68	0.6%	77	0.6%	9	13%
Jay	6	0.1%	7	0.1%	1	17%
Jefferson	399	3.6%	464	3.8%	65	16%
Jennings	255	2.3%	304	2.5%	49	19%
Johnson	46	0.4%	32	0.3%	-14	-30%
Knox	80	0.7%	103	0.8%	23	29%
Kosciusko	45	0.4%	63	0.5%	18	40%
Lagrange	101	0.9%	89	0.7%	-12	-12%
Lake	9	0.1%	10	0.1%	1	11%
LaPorte	173	1.5%	197	1.6%	24	14%
Lawrence	279	2.5%	301	2.5%	22	8%

* Harvest totals from check station reports. Table 1 continued next page.

Table 1. Indiana wild turkey harvest by county, spring 2007 and 2008 *con't.*

County	2007 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	2008 Reported* Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Difference from prior year	Percent Change
Madison	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	---
Marion	0	0.0%	4	0.0%	4	---
Marshall	222	2.0%	255	2.1%	33	15%
Martin	221	2.0%	241	2.0%	20	9%
Miami	13	0.1%	23	0.2%	10	77%
Monroe	197	1.8%	239	2.0%	42	21%
Montgomery	67	0.6%	62	0.5%	-5	-7%
Morgan	63	0.6%	86	0.7%	23	37%
Newton	72	0.6%	86	0.7%	14	19%
Noble	26	0.2%	53	0.4%	27	104%
Ohio	155	1.4%	188	1.5%	33	21%
Orange	275	2.5%	290	2.4%	15	5%
Owen	246	2.2%	246	2.0%	0	0%
Parke	333	3.0%	302	2.5%	-31	-9%
Perry	349	3.1%	320	2.6%	-29	-8%
Pike	306	2.7%	274	2.2%	-32	-10%
Porter	11	0.1%	25	0.2%	14	127%
Posey	99	0.9%	123	1.0%	24	24%
Pulaski	87	0.8%	94	0.8%	7	8%
Putnam	149	1.3%	150	1.2%	1	1%
Randolph	3	0.0%	6	0.0%	3	100%
Ripley	219	2.0%	234	1.9%	15	7%
Rush	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	-1	-100%
St. Joseph	114	1.0%	170	1.4%	56	49%
Scott	166	1.5%	194	1.6%	28	17%
Shelby	5	0.0%	1	0.0%	-4	-80%
Spencer	277	2.5%	275	2.3%	-2	-1%
Starke	236	2.1%	266	2.2%	30	13%
Steuben	234	2.1%	299	2.5%	65	28%
Sullivan	242	2.2%	303	2.5%	61	25%
Switzerland	467	4.2%	533	4.4%	66	14%
Tippecanoe	34	0.3%	40	0.3%	6	18%
Tipton	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	---
Union	62	0.6%	56	0.5%	-6	-10%
Vanderburg	19	0.2%	19	0.2%	0	0%
Vermillion	124	1.1%	154	1.3%	30	24%
Vigo	189	1.7%	189	1.5%	0	0%
Wabash	63	0.6%	56	0.5%	-7	-11%
Warren	115	1.0%	139	1.1%	24	21%
Warrick	293	2.6%	269	2.2%	-24	-8%
Washington	255	2.3%	314	2.6%	59	23%
Wayne	35	0.3%	28	0.2%	-7	-20%
Wells	4	0.0%	7	0.1%	3	75%
White	34	0.3%	34	0.3%	0	0%
Whitley	6	0.1%	12	0.1%	6	100%
Totals	11,163	100.0%	12,204	100.0%	1,041	9%

* Harvest totals from check station reports.

Figure 1 2008 Spring Turkey Harvest

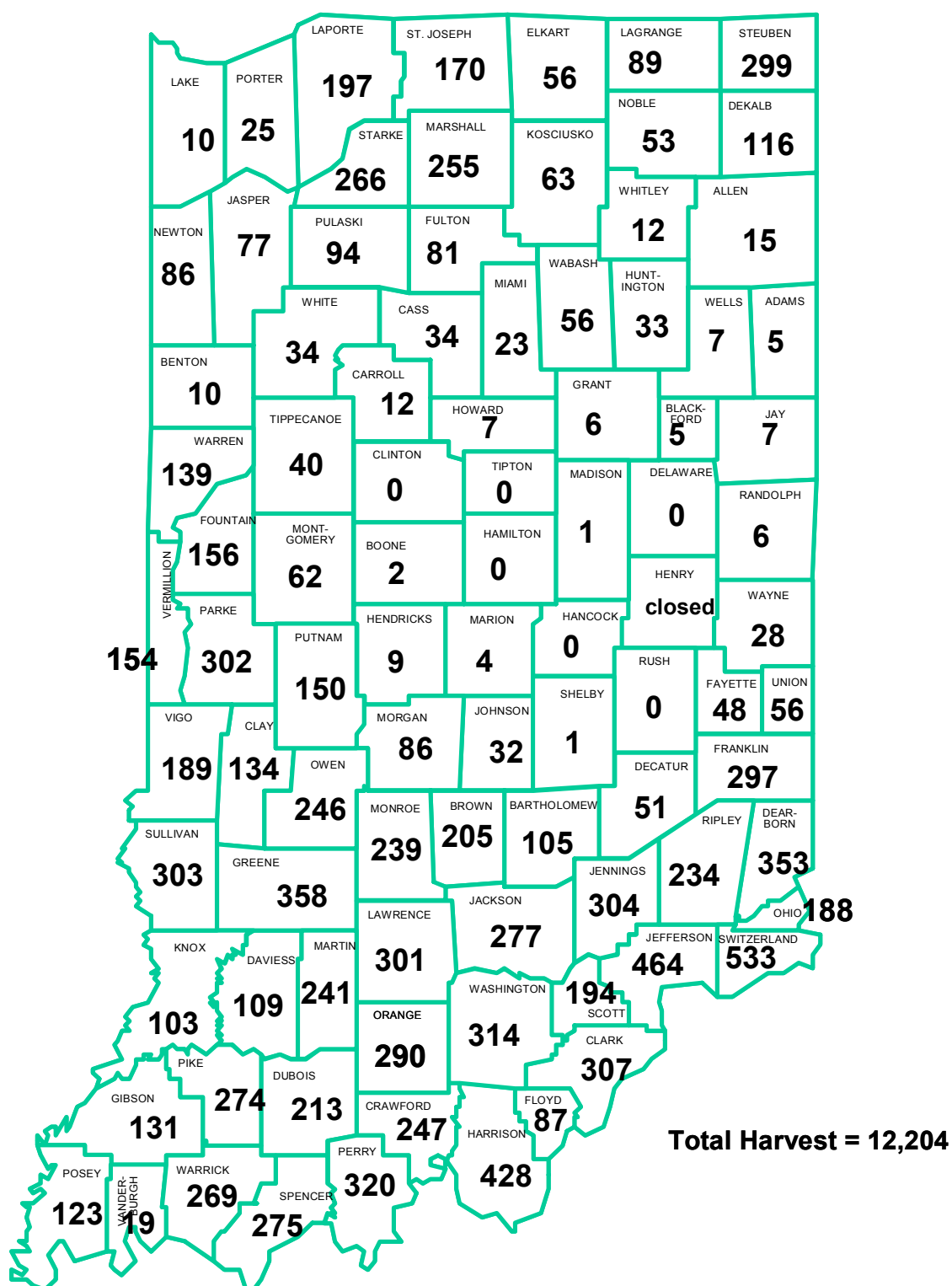


Fig. 2. Harvest by Day of Season

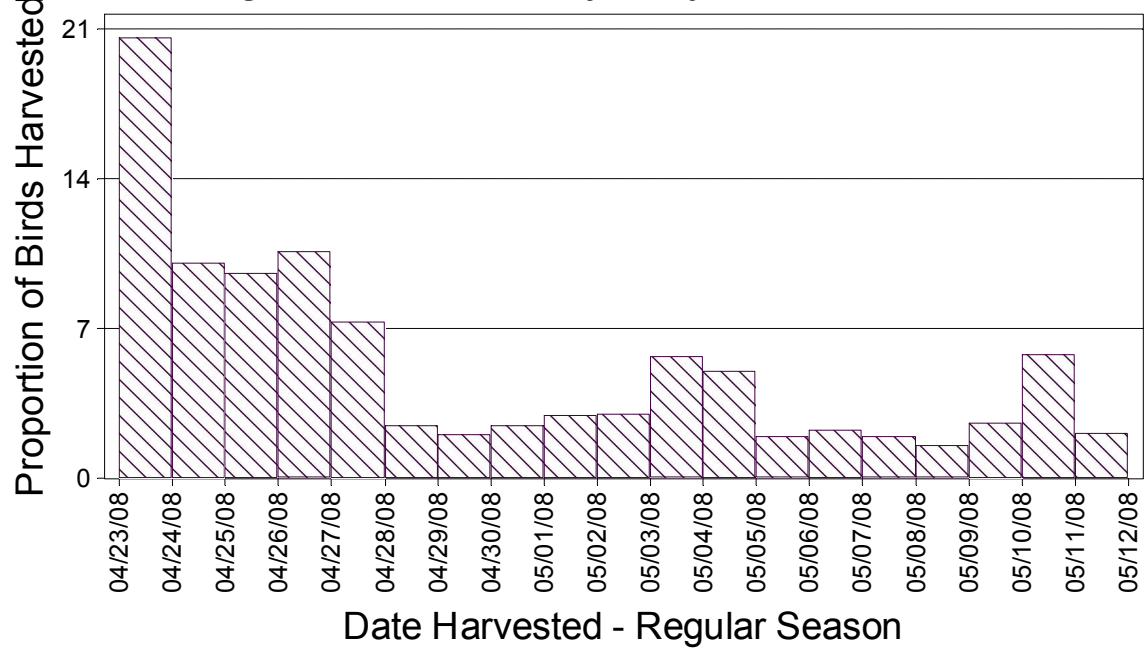


Fig. 3 Harvest by Time of Day

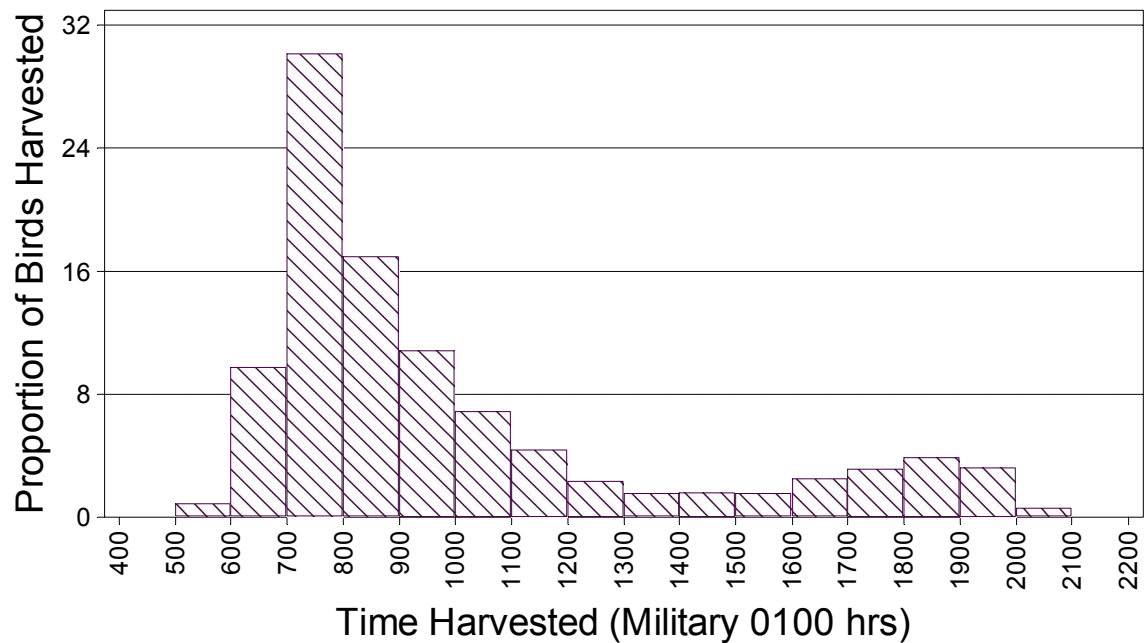


Table 2. Composition of Indiana's spring gobbler harvests, 1970-2008.

	Reported	Age Class	Percentages*	and Mean	Weights (lbs)		
Year	Harvest	1Yr	Wt.	2Yr	Wt	3+Yr	Wt
1970	6	0%		33%		67%	
1971	11	9%		9%		82%	
1972	12	0%		17%		83%	
1973	27	4%		37%		59%	
1974	26	15%		27%		58%	
1975	15	7%		20%		73%	
1976	32	22%		19%		59%	
1977	46	17%		26%		57%	
1978	33	33%		18%		48%	
1979	48	47%		29%		25%	
1980	54	33%		38%		29%	
1981	90	29%		20%		51%	
1982	73	21%		19%		60%	
1983	93	34%		38%		28%	
1984	104	32%		39%		29%	
1985	255	40%		39%		21%	
1986	293	29%		41%		30%	
1987	741	24%		44%		32%	
1988	905	45%	15.4	39%	20.7	16%	21.8
1989	1,359	20%	15.5	63%	20.7	17%	22.2
1990	1,505	31%	15.2	41%	21.0	28%	21.9
1991	2,318	25%	15.5	53%	21.1	22%	22.2
1992	2,531	38%	15.1	43%	20.8	19%	22.2
1993	3,500	18%	15.9	60%	20.9	22%	22.4
1994	3,741	41%	15.2	37%	21.2	22%	22.4
1995	4,706	28%	15.6	55%	20.6	18%	22.1
1996	4,859	24%	15.6	53%	21.6	23%	22.7
1997	5,790	21%	15.7	56%	21.5	24%	22.7
1998	6,384	22%	15.5	51%	21.1	28%	22.5
1999	6,548	25%	15.5	49%	21.1	26%	22.6
2000	7,822	27%	15.2	44%	20.7	28%	21.9
2001	9,975	26%	15.7	50%	20.1	24%	22.1
2002	10,575	27%	15.7	47%	21.3	27%	22.5
2003	10,366	24%	15.3	49%	21.3	28%	22.4
2004	10,765	24%	15.8	49%	21.4	27%	22.8
2005	11,159	33%	14.9	44%	20.9	23%	22.3
2006	13,193	14%	14.5	67%	20.7	19%	22.1
2007	11,163	22%	15.5	42%	21.5	26%	22.6
Previous Years' Means **		24%	15.4	49%	21.0	26%	22.4
2008	12,204	22%	16.0	52%	21.7	26%	22.9

* Based on longest spur measurement

** Mean percents and weights based on previous 10 years.

Figure 4
Harvest Age Structure 1980-2008

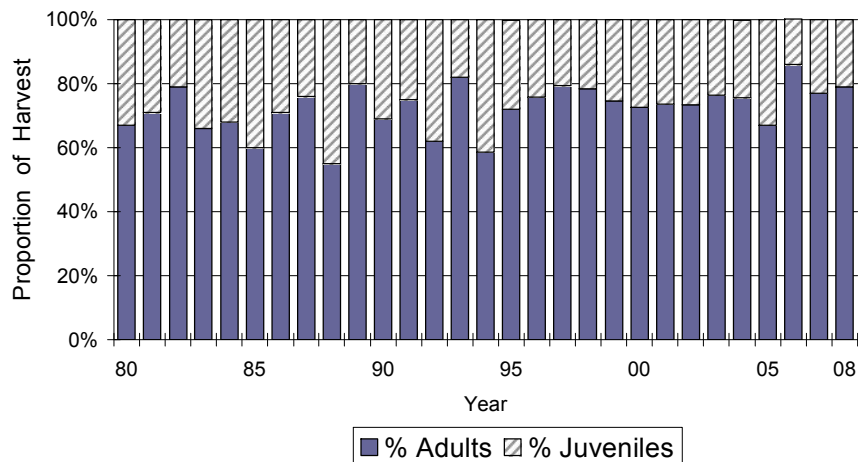


Table 3. Regional spring turkey harvest and age structure in Indiana, 2004 to 2008.

	Region						
	North	East-central	West-central	South-central	Southeast	Southwest	Statewide
<u>2004</u>							
Harvest	1,303	18	2,074	3,125	2,681	1,511	10,765
% of Total Harvest	12%	0.02%	19%	29%	25%	14%	---
Juvenile %	37%	28%	24%	22%	23%	20%	24%
<u>2005</u>							
Harvest	1,346	21	2,076	3,277	2,945	1,480	11,159
% of Total Harvest	12%	0.02%	19%	29%	26%	13%	---
Juvenile %	37%	48%	38%	33%	26%	30%	34%
<u>2006</u>							
Harvest	1,533	23	2,566	3,946	3,458	1,667	13,193
% of Total Harvest	12%	0.02%	20%	30%	26%	13%	---
Juvenile %	34%	9%	12%	10%	13%	13%	14%
<u>2007</u>							
Harvest	1,758	51	2,104	2,919	2,831	1,500	11,163
% of Total Harvest	16%	0.05%	19%	26%	25%	13%	---
Juvenile %	32%	38%	23%	18%	18%	22%	22%
<u>2008</u>							
Harvest	2,166	60	2,233	3,172	3,057	1,516	12,204
% of Total Harvest	18%	0.05%	18%	26%	25%	12%	---
Juvenile %	34%	25%	22%	19%	18%	18%	22%

Fig. 5. 2008 Spring Wild Turkey Harvest by Regions

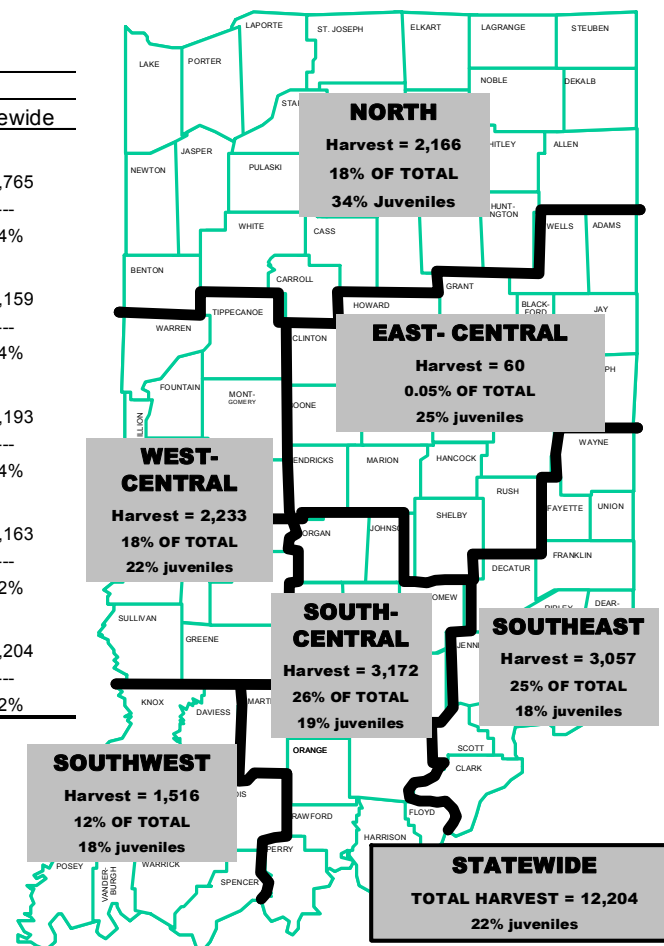


Table 4. Summary of Indiana's wild turkey hunting seasons, 1970 to 2008.

Year	Regular Season Dates	Season Length (Days)	No. of Counties	No. of Permits Sold*	Est. No. of Hunters**	Reported Harvest	Hunter Success
1970	5/2-5/5	4	3	75	62	6	9.7%
1971	5/1-5/5	5	9	298	224	11	4.9%
1972	4/26-4/30	5	9	585	422	12	2.8%
1973	4/25-4/29	5	11	625	503	27	5.4%
1974	4/24-4/28	5	11	665	496	26	5.2%
1975	4/29-5/5	7	11	722	501	15	3.0%
1976	4/29-5/5	7	13	666	500	32	6.4%
1977	4/28-5/5	8	16	668	520	46	8.8%
1978	4/26-5/7	12	18	852	619	33	5.3%
1979	4/25-5/6	12	19	932	860	48	5.6%
1980	4/23-5/4	12	17	706	670	54	8.1%
1981	4/22-5/3	12	18	922	814	90	11.1%
1982	4/21-5/2	12	18	1,125	696	73	10.5%
1983	4/20-5/1	12	18	1,218	984	93	9.5%
1984	4/25-5/6	12	18	1,320	1,205	104	8.6%
1985	4/24-5/5	12	25	1,882	1,302	255	19.6%
1986	4/23-5/4	12	25	2,523	1,648	293	17.8%
1987	4/22-5/6	15	33	3,348	2,619	741	28.3%
1988	4/27-5/11	15	33	10,894	4,677	905	19.4%
1989	4/26-5/10	15	39	11,442	6,068	1,359	22.4%
1990	4/25-5/9	15	39	14,379	7,860	1,505	19.1%
1991	4/24-5/8	15	43	16,387	9,643	2,318	24.0%
1992	4/22-5/6	15	43	18,735	13,110	2,531	19.3%
1993	4/28-5/16	19	48	21,078	15,673	3,500	22.3%
1994	4/27-5/15	19	48	23,357	18,622	3,741	20.1%
1995	4/26-5/14	19	52	28,858	20,861	4,706	22.6%
1996	4/24-5/12	19	52	28,733	21,442	4,859	22.6%
1997	4/23-5/11	19	74	32,703	23,085	5,790	25.1%
1998	4/22-5/10	19	74	32,889	22,876	6,384	27.9%
1999	4/21-5/9	19	74	38,730	27,285	6,548	24.0%
2000	4/26-5/14	19	74	40,801	28,615	7,822	27%
2001	4/25-5/13	19	74	43,815	36,103	9,975	28%
2002	4/24-5/12	19	90	44,333	37,919	10,575	28%
2003	4/23-5/11	19	90	48,857	40,110	10,366	26%
2004	4/21-5/9	19	90	50,839	41,996	10,765	26%
2005	4/27-5/15	19	88	50,839	49,684	11,159	22%
2006	4/26-5/14	19	88	67,290	50,880	13,193	26%
2007	4/25-5/13	19	91	69,860	52,660	11,163	21%
2008	4/23-5/11	19	91	71,052	54,241	12,204	22%

* After 1986, totals include lifetime licenses. After 1987, total includes youth licenses sold from Jan-May.

** No. of hunters includes those permit holders who hunted ≥ 1 day and since 1986 has been adjusted for non-licensed landowners or military hunters.

Bold italics = preliminary estimates based on projecting previous years' trends or means while also accounting for potential effects of regulation changes.